

**ON
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ROAD**





Go!

45,000 spectators found a seat somewhere in the Angel Stadium last Saturday for one of the most eagerly awaited AMA Supercross Championships in recent memory to begin. Ryan Villopoto started 2012 as he ended 2011: convincingly. Click on the orange 'O' for video clips throughout the magazine...

Photo by Steve Cox



AMA-MX





MotoGP

Deadly winter...

If there is a rider you cannot fault for dedication and preparation then it's Nicky Hayden but the Kentuckian had his winter training plans interrupted with a broken left wrist and two fractured ribs after a crash while riding dirt-track. He was joined on the injury list by Andrea Dovizioso two weeks later. The first test of 2012 takes place in three weeks. Keep an eye out for a Nicky Hayden exclusive story coming soon in OTOR...

Photo by Ducati Corse Press







AMA-MX

Faith leapt...

The rider from the 'Super 4' of Supercross who underwent the biggest shift of his career for 2012 was Ryan Dungey. Now a factory KTM racer the 22 year old vindicated his talent and ability further by complimenting the Austrians potent new 450SX-F at Anaheim. A maiden podium finish with third place in Los Angeles was the start of a shiny era for both parties...

Photo by Hoppenworld.com/KTM Images





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AMA-SX

LOS ANGELES

ANAHEIM · JANUARY 7th · Rnd 1 of 17

Supercross winner: Ryan Villopoto, Kawasaki

SX Lites West winner: Cole Seely, Honda



10:06

HIGH FLYER: RV TAKES A1

Words and photos by Steve Cox



GoPro





It's not just a steak sauce. It's the opening round of the Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Championship. Anaheim 1. The first of two (formerly three) Anaheim events. The motocross and supercross series off-season is sometimes almost painful for fans, participants, and media alike, as injuries often sideline top racers before the first round even gets going, and everyone seems to have their

own ideas about what's going to go down when the gate finally drops.

The relief valve on all of this hot air was blown open on Saturday night at the Angel Stadium in Anaheim, California, as the opening salvo of the Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Series went off in "The House That Jeremy Built".

Since 1974 the winner of the first round has gone on to be champion 18 times...



And there wasn't much in the way of surprises, unless you think that the guy with the number-one plate on his bike, who won everything possible in 2011, was going to go out and get smoked. And it's likely that a lot of people thought that, as the 450cc class, even without injured Trey Canard (for the moment) boasts one of the deepest fields the sport has ever seen, with 15 past SX winners in either the

450 or Lites classes, 9 racers who have won professional SX titles in either category, and 8 racers who have won in the 450 class. All of this not counting Trey Canard, who fits all three categories.

But many thought James Stewart would come out a winner, or Chad Reed (on a factory bike this year, unlike at Anaheim 1 in 2011), or even Ryan Dungey in his first official supercross on



KTM didn't have to wait long for their first podium in the premier class. A first victory cannot be far away...

a KTM. In the end, though, it was Ryan Villopoto repeating his 2011 performance at Anaheim. Except maybe even more dominant this year, while running the number-one plate in the 450cc class for the first time in his career. Perhaps the biggest surprise, though, is two-fold: First, that Ryan Dungey's third-place per-

formance was KTM's first-ever podium finish in the premier class in supercross; and second, that Dungey looked absolutely no different at Anaheim 1 this year as he did in 2011. Dungey was as solid as anyone would ever expect him to be, battling it out tooth-and-nail with Reed and Stewart for nearly the entire main event.



Cole Seely was a surprise Anaheim winner in the first outing for the Lites

So, outside of the obvious (which is that Ryan Villopoto may even be stronger still than he was last year, which is a scary proposition for his opposition), perhaps the most significant thing we learned at Anaheim 1 was that Ryan Dungey hasn't seemed to suffer at all in his switch from a factory Suzuki that everyone

loves, to a factory KTM that most top racers were afraid to take indoors prior to last Saturday night.

Some interesting times ahead.

Jake Weimer takes off in practice. Click on the orange 'O' for a lap of Anaheim...







Aiming for the inside
line...the season gets
ready to roll





Mitch studies the next phase of Pro Circuit's world domination plan

AMA-SX CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

AMA SUPERCROSS RESULT

Riders		
1	Ryan Villopoto, USA	Kawasaki
2	Chad Reed, AUS	Honda
3	Ryan Dungey, USA	KTM
4	Justin Brayton, USA	Honda
5	Jake Weimer, USA	Kawasaki

AMA SUPERCROSS STANDINGS (AFTER 1 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders		Points
1	Ryan Villopoto	025
2	Chad Reed	022
3	Ryan Dungey	020
4	Justin Brayton	018
5	Jake Weimer	016

AMA SUPERCROSS LITES WEST COAST RESULT

Riders		
1	Cole Seely, USA	Honda
2	Tyla Rattray, RSA	Kawasaki
3	Eli Tomac, USA	Honda
4	Marvin Musquin, FRA	KTM
5	Ryan Sipes, USA	Yamaha

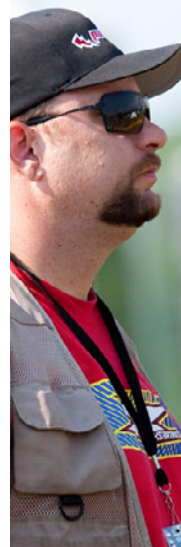
AMA SUPERCROSS LITES WEST STANDINGS

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5	Ryan Sipes	016

DAMA-MX BLOG

LEVEL REACHING...

By Steve Matthes



There's a car racing association over in America called NASCAR. It's basically an eight-cylinder, carburetted motor in a heavy package going around in circles. To my utter amazement this series is huge in America and far surpasses F1 and IndyCar over here. It's not a very technical car to drive, modifications are limited and you can be pushing 50 years old and be successful in it.

As you can tell, I'm not a fan of the sport but what I do admire is the marketing efforts that the series have done over the years. The drivers who win races and championships are certainly popular but there are plenty that don't sniff the podium that are millionaires and have a strong following. In my opinion this is where the sport of supercross/motocross is lacking (as media member I'm to blame for this as well).

We have this mentality in our sport that 'if you don't win the race, you suck'. The racers at the top generally get most of the praise, most of the coverage, the good sponsors and are rewarded with huge riches. The guy that ends up 7th or 8th usually is just scraping by. The financial earnings gap between the top elite in our sport and the guy that can keep him in sight is astronomical. And that folks, is where NASCAR kicks our ass.

Granted, it's not even possible to quantify how much bigger NASCAR is than mx over here but still, there are drivers that do not make "the chase" (the top twelve in the points who get to compete in the last segment of races to be the overall points champion) who are very 'well off' and loved by the fans. We need more of this in our sport. Not everyone can be a James Stewart or Ryan Villopoto. As I'm sure you all know reading this, the rider in tenth place last year in the supercross series (Nick Wey) would absolutely blow the doors off most racers in the world.

We're not taking care of our own. Be it through the media for not talking enough about the tenth place guy, through the sponsors and their mentality of paying only for the best-whatever it is, we're not doing enough. The best riders in the sport should make more than anyone else. They should be set for life; they've earned it no doubt about that. But should they make ten to twenty times what the rider in 7th makes? I know for a fact that there was a top ten rider indoors and out last year in the 450 class that was making 30K salary for the year. That was it. That's barely the cost of living in Southern California. This rider had to rely on purse money to get up into the upper echelons of the basic population. And he had a skill to ride a motorcycle like no other.

Are we going to have a race in the future where the gate drops and just five or six racers launch off it? We need the gates full and we need competition among the twenty racers in the main event and every single one of those racers need to be recognized in order that they can make a good living from racing dirt bikes.

We've got to do a better job of promoting the Chris Bloses and Jimmy Albertsons of the world. These guys are tremendous athletes and they are having trouble finding saddles or at least, getting a ride that pays you a monthly salary to compete.

The money just isn't there. But yet it is. Conservative estimates have James Stewart and Ryan Villopoto pulling in 3 million a year if they never finish a race. That's just the base salary. We're only as healthy as our worst racers in the sport and right now, someone better call the ambulance.

Or better yet, call some NASCAR marketing people.

DUNGEY FACTORY ED. LAUNCH, CAIROLI KEEPS 350 FOR '12

It didn't take KTM long to capitalise on their marquee signing for the AMA Supercross season and unveiling of this tasty 2012 KTM 450 SX-F Factory Edition for the U.S. market helps push the bike through AMA rules for the 2010 champ to cut new ground for the factory across the Atlantic. The bike is complete new from the tyres up with the 449.3cc powerplant, chassis, swingarm all focussed on optimising handling and performance. The Austrians hope this model is the one to tip the scales within the arenas and with the De Coster-Dungey axis in control of development and potential this a genuine 'hand-rubbing' phase for the newly established factory team.

More info from the PR: 'The bike comes equipped with aggressive new generation bodywork, an orange powder-coated frame, racing seat cover, orange anodized rear sprocket, black Excel rims, orange radiator protectors, Dunlop MX51 tires, black anodized Renthal Fat bar and Factory Red Bull KTM SX Team graph-

ics. In addition, the Factory Edition will also include a user setting tool which gives the rider the necessary software to adjust the injection and ignition for every RPM range.'

Spec clearly isn't a problem. From springtime American customers will be expected to part with \$9599 if they want a piece of the technology that could make supercross history.

While the mettle of the '12 450cc has yet to be really tested either in AMA or FIM competition KTM MXGP Team manager Stefan Everts revealed through an article on the world championship's official website www.motocrossmx1.com that MX1 World Champion Tony Cairoli will steer the works 350SX-F for the third season in a row during 2012.

OTOR was at Mattighofen during December and Technical Leader Dirk Gruebel mentioned that Cairoli had already made his decision after recent tests in Italy with both 350 and 450cc motorcycles.





STEWART UNDECIDED ABOUT PIRELLI?

By Steve Matthes

It was a big decision for James Stewart to go with Pirelli tyres this year when he signed with JGR Yamaha.

Pirelli entered the American market in a big way once again in 2010 with the JGR guys and they had some success, no doubt about it. However, the one place where a tyre is key is in supercross and specifically, at the Anaheim California rounds.

And one race in, it appears that decision may have backfired on Stewart and the JGR team as they allegedly experimented with different brands during practice and according to sources Stewart set the fastest qualifying time with a Dunlop rear.

For the night show Stewart apparently ran Pirelli front and rear and although he did crash, so did Chad Reed on his Dunlops so it's not like you can point to the tyres as the reason why Stewart didn't do as well as expected (sixth position). As far as this week, rumours abound that the JGR Yamaha team, Stewart and Pirelli are out at the Yamaha track to make sure this doesn't happen again.

Getting Stewart was a huge move for the brand that is dominant over in Europe but now Pirelli is facing its toughest test yet in building a tyre that can work on the slick hard pack that is Californian supercross. There's no doubt that the company has the means to make a good tyre but perhaps there is still work ahead.



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AMA SUPERCROSS 2012: THE INSIDE LINE

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Steve Cox, Andrew Fredrickson, www.ktmimages.com/Hoppenworld.com

Feld Motor Sport's new distribution deal with IMG Media could mean more access to the AMA Supercross series outside of the USA at a time when the sport warrants the widest international scope possible. For now geographical boundaries prevent any in-depth first hand analysis (even though OTOR will be reporting and producing a few features between rounds two and three at Phoenix and Dodgers Stadium) so in an effort to grab some perspective as to what we might expect this season RacerX writer, OTOR contributor and creator of www.pulpmx.com Steve Matthes comes into the firing line...

Realistically is there anyone who can make regular inroads into the elite of Dungey, Reed, Stewart and Villopoto? If you had to lay money on someone who would it be and why?

SM: Well, I'm not sure if you forgot Trey Canard or not but he can definitely run with those four as we saw last year when he won two races. He's going to be coming into the series with an injury but should be up to speed soon enough and, in my opinion, will be right there with all those guys.

After that, honestly I don't see anyone else. Kevin Windham can if he gets a start and the track suits him. Justin Brayton won a couple of heat races last year so maybe he can for a few laps and if he cuts back on the crashes. We should just be happy that we have the possibility of multiple race winners after years of McGrath/Carmichael.

Has the championship become more a test of attrition? So many weekends and miles traveled, little recovery time between rounds and the tendency for 'routines' to pop up (regular fast starters etc). It seems just getting through it is key. What do you think?

SM: Definitely one thing the media and fans (and I count myself in this group) forget about - and don't give enough credit for - is the ability for these racers to stay healthy. That, in itself, is a skill. Chad Reed has shown us this in abundance. On a lesser level Nick Wey's name comes up when team managers go for this reliability factor over perhaps 'potential' because he can stay on the track. You want the rider to push himself and reach new levels but at the same time, they got to finish the races and make all of them for the sponsors and teams to be happy.



“We need more dirt in the stadiums and the obstacles need to be better thought out and made differently to keep the racing good...”

Do you find the series works better in certain types of stadiums or are there hotspots for Supercross in terms of the fans and atmosphere?

SM: By now the folks at Feld have this thing ‘down’ pretty well in terms of the cities that work and the ones that don’t.

The west coast is strong as is the Midwest (although one of the stranger happenings in memory is the Minneapolis Supercross which was a 60,000+ for many years in McGrath’s heyday and then in the span of a couple of years, fell to under 30K) and for whatever reason, supercross doesn’t seem to work in Florida with the series visiting Orlando, Miami, Tampa and Jacksonville and none of those venues working out. Definitely the most passionate fans are in the Midwest. Cities like St Louis, Indianapolis and Pontiac, Michigan back in the day had some crazy people.

And we talk about how Florida races don’t work but yet, four hours north of Jacksonville is Atlanta, Georgia and it’s a sell-out each and every year.

The domes that are just built for football don’t work as much as the other places because of how they’re constructed; longer and more narrow than the others. This cuts back on the creativity of the tracks and limits the lanes.

Where do you stand on the whole debate regarding the level and standard of the tracks against quality racing? Could a SX-MX layout like the Monster Energy Cup have any place in the series?

SM: I definitely feel like the advent of four-strokes along with the lack of creativity in tracks has hurt the sport in general. The 450cc thumpers are so easy to ride, the guys can make mistakes and still jump as far as they need to. In the two-stroke days, a rider had to be perfect to jump certain sections and when they weren’t perfect mistakes happened and that made for some good racing. Nowadays, the guys touch down once and then they make a turn and repeat. Whoops have gotten a whole lot easier on the four-strokes as well; the tracks break down quicker with them, which leads to ‘follow the leader’.

I believe we need more dirt ferried into the stadiums and the obstacles need to be better thought-out and made differently to keep the racing good. Maybe limit the bikes ‘a la NASCAR’ to hold back some power. Something needs to be done because the quality of racing has suffered since four-strokes started in supercross. The Monster Cup sort-of-worked and has some potential but overall, it wasn’t that great.



FEATURE



Should Supercross have a better international audience? Is the potential there or do the gates need to be more cosmopolitan? Do you rate the TV coverage/production?

SM: Supercross should indeed have more of an international audience although I have to admit, I have no clue how big or small the international audience is. I know that the world has never been smaller in terms of the internet bringing everyone together and to me, the cancelling of the audio webcast was a terrible idea. It didn't cost that much and opened up the sport to people all over the world who couldn't watch the race.

Every year more and more races are live on TV which is a great thing for everyone but I do worry about how the promoters make the shows more of a pitch to the viewers that they should come down to the race and buy a tick-

et. I feel like if you help your 'partners' out (i.e. the teams) and embrace all the sponsors (even if they conflict with your own series sponsors) then everyone can grow together and the entire sport can grow. There's too much exclusivity now with the TV announcers not allowed to mention a competing series sponsor more than a few times. Although I understand the willingness to promote the races that you pay to put on the air, I don't understand why teams and riders aren't made a bigger part of the show itself. Then again, last time I looked, there was no marketing degree on my wall and maybe I'm crazy.

In your opinion why did Ryan Dungey not win as much in 2011?

SM: I just think that the other guys stepped it up and although I hate to use the word lucky, I

“Ryan [Villopoto] can raise his game when needs be but one of his strengths is that he doesn’t worry too much when he gets beat. He just moves on and figures things out...”

feel like Ryan got some luck when Stewart and Reed got hurt and knocked themselves out of the '10 series. As well, Ryan Villopoto wasn't as powerful as he is now. He stepped up his game, as did Stewart and Reed and Ryan - while super-fast and super-hard working - did not. His two titles in 2010 were well-deserved and we all saw him dominate everyone else. I also know he didn't slack in 2011, and didn't party his way through the off-season, so by using that logic, he just didn't take that step up that he needed to.

There was a little of the unpredictable James Stewart of old in 2011. How much of that can really be down to the team/bike and how much was down to tougher adversaries?

SM: I think a little bit of both to be honest. I don't think he was happy with the bike but for the first time in his life he was caught and passed by other riders. That's got to be a mental blow to anyone. In the past, and in his whole life, when he didn't win it was because he crashed or got beat by the best rider of all-time (Carmichael). The bike, while a good part of anyone's racing, isn't all of it and that makes me think that he did indeed slip back a little bit.

Still we saw him do things that others couldn't or wouldn't do, he was almost always the fastest guy in practice and I wouldn't worry too much about him. I really wanted to see him on a Suzuki (a bike he was riding all summer on) but in the end, he couldn't make a deal to ride

one so he went back to blue. Although on a different team, I am very interested in seeing how 2012 works out for James.

Do you think we will see a more confident Ryan Villopoto in 2012? He seemed to grow into the season in 2011.

SM: Yes, I definitely think so. Ryan's not a guy to get wrapped up with what his competition is doing or think about things too much. He can raise his game when needs be but one of his strengths is that he doesn't worry too much when he gets beat. He just moves on and figures things out. I think that without a doubt, the mental game is one of his and Chad Reed's strengths compared to their competition.

Chad Reed had that underdog factor in 2011. Is there reason to believe he will still have that edge for this season? Will increased support help that much?

SM: We saw what happened when Reed got on the factory Honda. As good as his Pro Circuit CRF450F was, there's no mistaking that Reed got better on the full-factory bike. And having a total off-season on it will help him. A thumb/hand injury probably sets him back a bit but he's Chad Reed.

No need to worry about him, he'll be fine and if he's in sight of the title halfway into the series, I'd be careful if I was the other guys. He's mentally very tough and he'll be there every race and except for 2010, he's never really been hurt.

MANTOVA AND VALENCE SHARE BILLING

Race fans eager for their first dose of the FIM world championship's best talent in action this year might have to examine their travel budget to see where they will prefer to go on February 18th and 19th. The Mantova Starcross and Valence International meetings are again scheduled for the same weekend and the factory teams have been split across the fixtures in Italy and France.

World Champions Red Bull KTM will be in the sand of Mantova (north of Bologna) as will the works Honda World Motocross squad duo of Evgeny Bobryshev and Rui Goncalves. Monster Energy Yamaha's David Philippaerts is also due to be on home turf although his French team-mates Steven Frossard and Christophe Charlier will join fellow Yamaha pilots Shaun Simpson and Arnaud Tonus at Valence.

Frossard lives on the doorstep of the circuit close to Lyon and is certainly the local favourite. The French can also look forward to the factory Kawasaki Racing Team (Gautier Paulin and Xavier Boog) and Rockstar Suzuki duo of Clement Desalle and Tanel Leok. The Ricci Husqvarna crew, Suzuki's MX2 line-up and Belgian LS Honda team (Ken De Dycker and Jonathan Barragan) help give the French the edge in the entry list boasting stakes.

Mantova can perhaps count on a decent degree of native support with Cairoli and Philippaerts on show. Curiously there has been no word yet of the Monster Energy CLS Kawasaki team with the Pourcel brothers. The initial outing for Christophe and Seb is bound to gather interest.



OSBORNE GETS MX2 GP PREP UNDERWAY

Ken Roczen enjoyed a well-known first dip into supercross racing this time last year before he returned to Europe and hit the ground running in the FIM MX2 World Championship. Hoping to catch something of the same momentum that helped the German grab two wins and two runner-up finishes in the first four rounds, Monster Energy Yamaha's Zach Osborne is over in the U.S. running laps in the West Coast Lites series. The 2010 British Champion took a reserved ninth place at Anaheim last weekend and is hoping for better in the coming events at Phoenix, Dodger Stadium and Oakland. The frantic pace and competitiveness of the AMA arena carries risks - you could even argue that Roczen was lucky to begin the Grand Prix season without injury

after several get-offs - but the sharpness and confidence enforced by the discipline is nothing but an asset. "I've been riding supercross since the beginning of the winter and the point of doing these races was to get into the groove of competition and also a little bit of a wish to be fully ready for the first Grands Prix," he said to OTOR. "It was cool being back inside the stadium and I know the result can be better if I get the start I want. I can easily make the top five for a main event and that will be the goal in the next three races I have here."

Osborne should be back in the UK with the British side of the factory team in February. In time to start the British Championship (11th March) and prepare fully for the first GP of sixteen on Easter Monday in Holland.



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WINTER SLUMBER...

By Adam Wheeler

Happy New Year and welcome to the first MOTOR of 2012. After inauguration in March 2011 we are now better placed to give more scope to the AMA Supercross series that started in Anaheim last weekend.

They talk of the 'aliens' of MotoGP but surely with Villopoto, Dungey, Reed and Stewart taking on the triples then the indoor championship has an elite all of its own and if the current campaign is anything like that witnessed and enjoyed last year then Supercross will be unmissable. In line with this sentiment of expectation (and perhaps one of the very few criticisms that can be thrown at the spectacle) it's a shame that non-American audiences are poorly catered for. While the FIM Motocross World Championship has a priority for pan global coverage (no matter how remote or at what hour it is broadcast) the tendency for the AMA action to remain stunted on U.S. shores up to days after the event is frustrating for what should be a blooming fanbase in Europe.

The off-road racing world has plenty of distractions in these early months of 2012 with Dakar in full flow by the time this passage is read, SX working around north America (with a dip into Canada...who else will try to cross the border with their iPad?) and even the inaugural FIM Super Enduro World Championship coming to a close in February. There are also a few one-off distractions like the Le Touquet beach race, which the factory Rockstar Suzuki team will be hoping to win again but this time with the assistance of new recruit Tanel Leok instead of '11 victor Steve Ramon. For motocross fans a few more weeks of idleness in terms of competition awaits as the Grand Prix community embark on the first tests and 'bike

training' with a view towards the new season.

For those riders looking for an alternative to laps around a frozen Lommel circuit the lure of better climes means travel plans to southern Europe; Italy, Portugal and Spain. The works Monster Energy Yamaha team (Rinaldi-side) are currently doing working through almost a month of activity on the island of Sardinia.

I'd commented in a previous issue on the incredulous fact that both the Mantova Starcross (Italy) and the Valence International (France) meetings – the traditional season curtain raisers – had conspired to be on the same weekend for the third year in a row. There are certain reasons for this, the four round Italian Championship starting the week after Mantova being one of the factors in the inflexibility of the organisers, but once more the chance to sample a Grand Prix 'round 0' with the majority of world championship participants eager to blow away the winter cobwebs is lost.

As I weigh-up the likelihood of heading to either France or Italy at least fans in the UK, France, Holland, Germany, Spain and Belgium can take solace in the fact that their domestic calendars will soon crank into action. National federations may not depend on (or demand) that the leading riders of their sport take part in their series but there is little doubt after the injury-spree of 2011 that Grand Prix stars are unlikely to deviate away from a busy sixteen round schedule.

In this respect the Italians have hit the mark. Their four round contest might be victim to the late winter elements but teams will be grateful of the testing ground and it will not distract from bigger priorities.





WHATEVER IT TAKES: HELPING THE MODERN MX ATHLETE

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer, Redeye

Analysis of virtually any facet of top-flight motocross inevitably involves a degree of focus on the physical demands of the sport. Whether its success or satisfaction, the maxim of 'no pain, no gain' holds firmly true, perhaps compared to any other motorcycle sport.

Specialized physical trainers have become a wider and much more established part of paddocks on both sides of the Atlantic. While editorial investigation and appreciation of these specialists has been forthcoming it was an important area of motorcycle racing OTOR had yet to touch on.

Stephan Nuesser has collaborated with some of the bigger names of the recent motocross Grand Prix era, such as Josh Coppins, Gautier Paulin and Max Nagl. The German has a Masters degree in Sport Science and works in performance test and training for professional athletes, mostly MX but also other sports like cycling, running and triathlon. He runs his own performance diagnostic lab near Cologne in Germany.

Handily he is also a former BMX and motocross racer and was, naturally, a more-than-capable source to satisfy our curiosity...

“Unfortunately there is not a lot of scientific knowledge, study or sport science in MX...”

In the last ten years have there been any major progressions or new trends for how athletes are training for motocross?

SN: I think generally training has been benefiting from more attention and realisation that good physical fitness also helps improve riding performance. Unfortunately there isn't a lot of scientific knowledge, study or sport-specific information about MX. Every top rider now has a 'kind of' trainer - which is good - but I still would like to see more professional trainers working in MX. I wouldn't say that there are any special trends in the training of MX riders. In general the physical fitness of the riders is getting to a higher level, so everyone needs to step it up to stay competitive.

The 'all-action' style of the younger generation of riders: is this a more physical way to race? Does it require more conditioning than the old days?

SN: That's a good question. I think that the 'new style' requires a lot of fitness but at the same time the high technical abilities of the young riders is also saving energy. For me the biggest different is the rider's attitude towards

training. Riders like Joel Smets [five times world champion and record 500cc GP winner] and so on had the motivation and attitude to train very hard every day. That has changed a lot; nowadays you can see young riders often not putting in the hours and just trusting or relying on their talent. There is a different approach but the young generation are also successful and their methods clearly have some merit.

In your opinion is motocross becoming a sport for even younger people because of the demands now?

SN: You could say there is a tendency that the top riders are getting younger (like Roczen, Herlings). In the '80s it was impossible to think of a World Champion being 17 years old. The kids now start much earlier and they also seem to learn quicker.

Also the technical demands of modern motocross are suiting younger people more the older riders. It is similar to the demands of BMX and MTB Downhill. All of these sports have really raised their levels over the last few years.

“In a race riders have heart rates of 170-190; that’s a lot for two forty minute motos. The physical load of riding motorcross is underestimated...”

You once said motocrossers are almost as fit as cyclists. Do you think they are near an Olympian level?

SN: I think that a few riders are on a really good physical level but not comparable with an Olympic cyclist. But you need to realize that motocrossers are often on the circuit and they can't effort the time on a bicycle compare to a pro cyclist, so that makes it a bit difficult to compare. Considering the time the MX riders spent on physical training they are at a very good standard.

Due to the degree of hard work involved is it a challenge as a trainer to keep the athlete 'interested' and their schedules varied?

SN: I think it's always good to diverse training and vary the program and intensities. It's never good to run the same routine every day. I still like to try new stuff like BMX or rock climbing because apart from the 'normal' physical

training you always learn something new from these 'new' sports that can help you in your main sport.

A good fitness level helps prevent crashes and injury and it's proven that you have better concentration and co-ordination when you are not so exhausted. It helps recovery. A good physical level is helpful in many different ways.

What is so brutal about off-road riding that it requires such dedication and attention to fitness?

SN: First of all riding a bike is much tougher than it looks. In the race the riders have heart rates of 170 to 190 beats per minute; over two forty minute motos that takes a lot. Also the impacts after jumps, bumps, berms etc takes a lot of energy. The 'physical load' of riding is underestimated. After a race the body needs much more recovery time than many people think because the 'physical damage' is quite intense.



DOVI JOINS TECH3 COLLARBONE CLUB

Andrea Dovizioso seemingly fulfilled his first contractual obligation to the Monster Yamaha Tech3 team last week, opting to get the obligatory broken collarbone out of the way in the close season. With last year's teammates Colin Edwards and Cal Crutchlow both having suffered the same injury within little more than a week of each other at a critical stage of the last campaign, Dovizioso will be

hoping the curse has struck him early following a motocross crash near his home last Thursday.

The Italian is hopeful of being fit to begin pre-season testing at Sepang in three weeks' time although Nicky Hayden faces a race against the clock following his broken shoulder and ribs suffered in a flat-track training crash over Christmas.



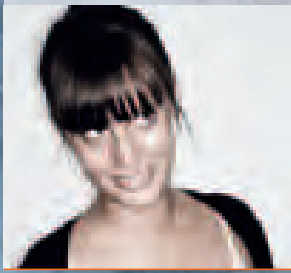
BARBERÁ BUSTED FOR DRINK ‘DRIVING’

Hector Barberá issued an apology to his team, sponsors and MotoGP followers on Sunday after details emerged in the Spanish press of his arrest for a drink-driving offence on Friday night. The Spaniard, who will ride a Ducati Desmosedici GP12 with Pramac Racing this season, explained in a lengthy statement that he was riding as a passenger in his friend's car following a family dinner in Valencia when they were

stopped by police. The driver tested positive and was duly arrested, prompting Barberá to suggest to the police that he take control of the car himself, since he had only had one drink. Upon taking the drivers' seat and starting the engine he was then also breathalysed, testing positive and being arrested as a result. "It was irresponsible on my part, even though I knew I wasn't in an inebriated state," admitted Barberá.



I NEED A DUKE BECAUSE ...



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Susi S.
Age
24
Profession
Ballerina



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Photos: R. Scheidl, A. Barabant, H. Mitterbauer

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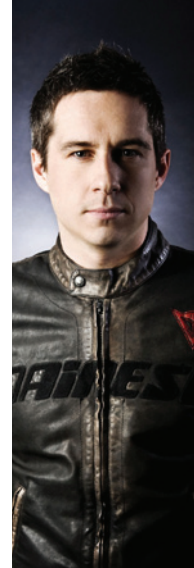
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TIME TO GET SERIOUS...

By Matthew Roberts

A few short years ago I was sat in an almighty traffic jam in Barcelona, having got lost on my way to dinner at *Chez Wheeler*. I took the opportunity to give Adam a call for directions when a policeman tapped on my window and booked me for using my phone whilst 'driving', issuing an on-the-spot 100 euro fine.

As such, nobody needs to tell me about the overly officious policing methods employed in Spain to make a quick buck for the local government. However, Hector Barberá's arrest last Friday was an avoidable embarrassment for the 25-year-old, who has yet to prove that he has matured into a serious MotoGP contender after two largely underwhelming seasons at the top level.

This is a kid with undoubted natural ability.

With no fewer than twelve 125cc Grand Prix podiums including six wins before his eighteenth birthday, he regularly diced with and beat the likes of Dani Pedrosa, Casey Stoner and Jorge Lorenzo throughout the early stages of a highly promising career.

However, he developed a strange habit of losing races by looking over his shoulder too often (to the point that he once self-mockingly celebrated victory by attaching wing-mirrors to his helmet) and he struggled to find the concentration and consistency required for a

250cc title challenge until his fifth and final season in 2009, before eventually entering MotoGP through the proverbial back door. On Sunday Héctor followed up his public apology by tweeting a photo of himself back out training on his road bicycle, followed by another one of him and Dani Pedrosa scaling Mont Blanc for charity last year.

This was an avoidable embarrassment for the 25 year old...

You can see the point he was surreptitiously trying to make and I do sympathise with him because we know he works hard on his physical training, but this is a question of mental approach.

You just can't imagine the likes of Pedrosa, Stoner or Lorenzo ever putting themselves in the position Barberá found himself in last Friday.

Héctor is a fantastic, fun guy with a wonderful character and huge talent for racing motorcycles.

However, he needs to get serious and have a big third season on board the Ducati otherwise he will soon be looking over his shoulder again – this time to protect his job.



HEAD START: A LITTLE BIT OF ART IN MotoGP

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Magaro Paintings

Artist/designer Marc Garcia has made a name for himself overseeing two companies. The first, Magaro Paintings, is rapidly gaining profile for first class helmet design-and-painting while the second, Garciarojals, gained a notable degree of fame for creating the MotoGP trophy in 2007. Here the Catalan explains what he does and how...

The fun you have as a kid stays with you...

I've been involved with bikes since I was small and began taking trips into the mountains with my dad and brother. Back then I used to decorate my first helmet, an MDS, with stickers and decals. It wasn't until a long time later, when I was eighteen and riding around the city that I started to mess around with the look of the lid; experimenting with paint, stencils, brushes and forms. I also started using sprays until I reached an advanced level. It has been 13 years since I designed my first helmet and I still do every model now with the same enthusiasm.

You can't beat word of mouth and a good work ethic...

At first I was working on my own stuff, and it grew from there. I made designs for friends and then for friends-of-friends. It got to a point where I was able to start my company Magaro Paintings and was able to specialize in painting and design for manufacturers of helmets. Over the years we've built up a client list that has Arai, Nolan, Shark, Suomy, XCTING, BKS, Bultaco, OnBrain, AntonioMiroHelmets...and riders and drivers that offer exposure of the brand. We've had all sorts of competitors really from Pol Espargaro in MotoGP to Joan Font in WRC, Josep Pedro in the CEV Spanish Championship and Dani Vilanova who races in European Touring car. With the manufacturers we normally make contact through events, exhibitions or shows and propose designs for their products. When you have a relationship with a company then every year they send you a briefing of what they need and then you work on a design to fit their requirements. For the riders or drivers



they almost always have an idea of what they want. We then meet up and chat about some possible plans. It is quite important because whatever a racer has on his lid is representative: his likes, personality and demeanour, way to race. One of our strong points is that we are always close to the individual and make each project a very personal process of work.

Turnaround can be pretty fast...

To be fast and efficient and to present the most ideas, along with the colour variations, we supply a lateral perspective of the helmet to the client. Sometimes you feel quite inspired and loads of ideas come rolling out and then there are other moments when the helmet doesn't really provoke a flood of creativity. Presentation of the lateral proposals is made with a mix of computer programmes like Illustrator and Photoshop. On average I'd say that every lateral scheme takes around two to three days to make up.

When you have feedback from the client or the

company then normally we drop all the other suggestions and focus on the idea that they like, therefore the other visuals are then put together: frontal view, rear and overhead. This takes about another two days.

Attention to detail is vital in the next stage...

If the idea is clear and you have all the dimensions of the helmet confirmed then the actual execution of the design is fast and in one week you can have it painted and finished. To avoid mistakes normally you dedicate time and care to each step: cleaning, sanding, printing, painting, details and varnish.

Where you can try and make a difference on the competition is through spending time to find new shapes and colours and choosing some modern and trendy effects. Above all else putting a lot of care into detail is the most important aspect. Today there is so much competition in the market therefore the goal is to always have products that are innovative and with ideas that hopefully nobody else has shown.

“I think everybody feels represented by some forms and colours and it is my job to synchronise this on a helmet so it becomes personal...”



Feeling proud of what you've created is one of the best parts...

Part of the job is not only being proud of your work after many hours but also through the relationship established with the client. I think from the last few that I have done I like the result we had for Dani Vilanova (pictured inset). After meeting with him and talking a lot about what he wanted we arrived to a really interesting mix of colours and shapes but in-line with his old image. It was not easy at all to come up with something new while trying to keep the essence of the old. After a lot of proposals and searching we found something that fitted exactly. I think everybody feels 'represented' by some forms and colours and my job is to synchronise this on a helmet so it becomes a unique and personal element.

In terms of companies I'm really proud of the last one we did for Nolan that was presented at the Milan EICMA show last November. To make a design for manufacture is tricky because you have to find the right balance so that it will appeal to the biggest potential consumer base but still look cool. Another factor is that the helmet has to be fabricated exactly how you think it should. In this case we really hit the mark, we designed a helmet that went onto the shelves looking exactly how we expected and also in the various coloured versions.

The MotoGP trophy was a happy moment of inspiration...

When I had the chance to make a proposal for the MotoGP trophy I knew straight away that it had to be something that was clear, defined and represented the values of the championship. The concept was more important than the look. For this I had to make sure it was not something overly difficult to visually 'digest'. At the same time I wanted to highlight the history of the series and honour all the champions from the beginning of the sport since 1949 while making a provision for all the future champions to come. From that emerged the coiling tower shape of the trophy and the idea that it has 'no end'.

The formation of the plaques came through wanting to give each champion their own section of the trophy and in this way I was able to use part of the logo of MotoGP to make this tower with all those names and ensure that every 'number one' had their own individual mark on the sport and its history.

For me it is a great honour to see the trophy at the heart of all the television presentations and features, this means it has become a recognised and valued part of the sport both to the public and the riders and all those connected with MotoGP.

BACKPAGE

2011 Grand Prix of Latvia
Girl of MX
By Ray Archer





ON TRACK OFF ROAD

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'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at www.ontrackoffroad.com every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

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